

UNM EDGE - AN URBAN DESIGN WORKSHOP



UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

February 2008

WORKSHOP TEAM

Workshop Leader

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Project Director

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Guest Speaker

Roger Schluntz, Dean at University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning

INTRODUCTION

The urban edge along Central Avenue that connects the south side of the University of New Mexico with the surrounding neighborhood suffers from a lack of physical resolution within both the academic and community realms. The current urban condition separates rather than connects the university and neighborhood, creating an environment hostile to the pedestrian and dominated by the automobile.

Our proposed urban interventions focus on the tremendous potential of this area to foster interactions between UNM and the surrounding community, sponsor a diversity of housing types and densities, and tame Central Avenue for pedestrians.



LOCATION



CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

www.cabq.gov



University Area



Community Area



EXISTING LAND USE

academic



street front
commercial



set back
commercial



apartment



multi-plex



single family



GROUP ONE - CENTRAL AVENUE

The team was asked to investigate improvements that could be made to the eastern most block of the charrette area.

As part of the investigation, the team proposed a redesign of Central Avenue from the five-street intersection of Girard Boulevard, Central Avenue, and Monte Vista Boulevard to Stanford Drive.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Gateways
- Mixed use
- Scaled building height
- Contextual design and density
- Pedestrian preference
- Additional academic buildings

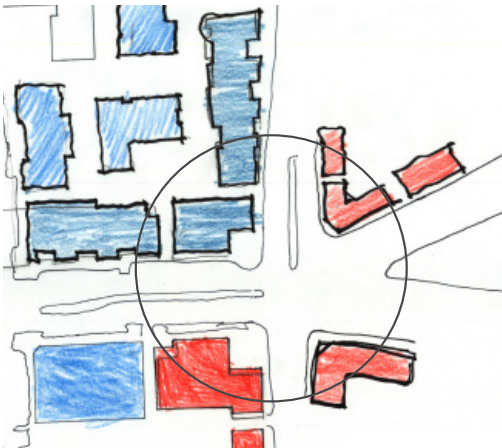


EAST BLOCKS OF STUDY AREA AND CENTRAL AVENUE

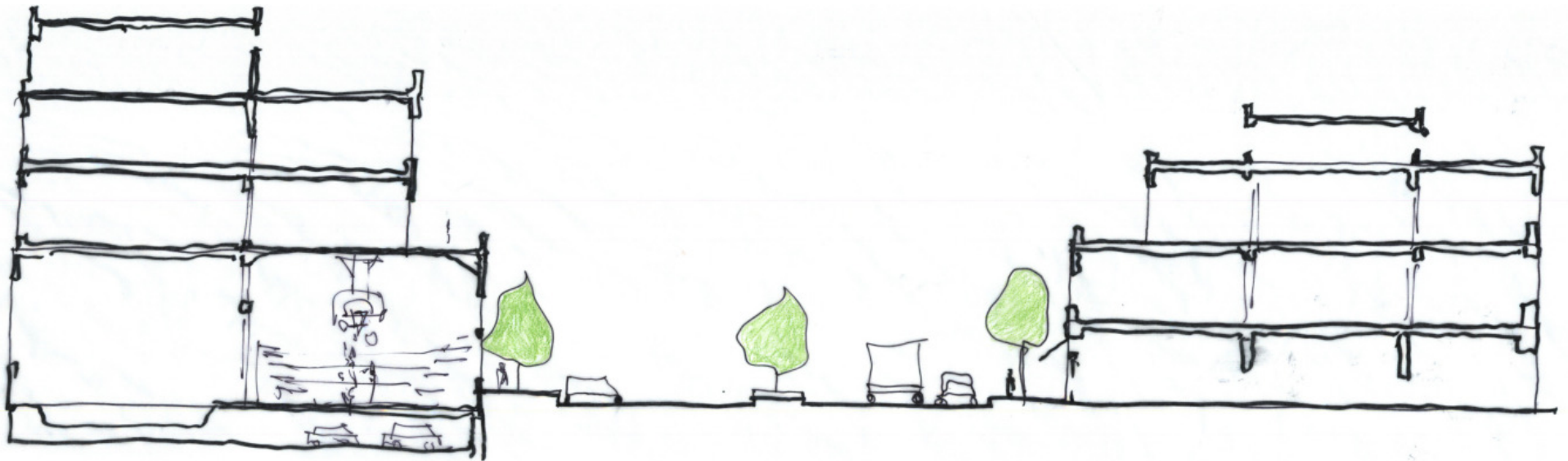
Gateways:

Because of this team's assigned block at the eastern edge of the project area; we felt it necessary to study the five way intersection at the corner of Central Avenue, Girard Boulevard, and Monte Vista Boulevard. At this intersection, we believed it important not to rely on the curbs to define the intersection, but instead, to use buildings to define the area as a space.

This intersection is the gateways of two areas. Driving east it is the gateway into the funky Nob Hill Shopping District, and driving west is the entrance to the UNM Campus. Within the proposed space, we gave each gateway entrance a unique expression. Driving west two small parking courts were designed, offering building faces perpendicular to central as signage. Driving east, the fronts of the commercial buildings were chamfered to ease the corner and to create a gateway into Nob Hill. The triangular block formed by the angled intersection of Monte Vista Boulevard and Central Avenue would remain a plaza, and with Dartmouth Drive terminated between the two streets. The remaining area could offer outdoor seating for the existing French Bistro.



EXAMPLE OF INTERSECTION - COMPLIMENTS OF DOUGLAS KELBAUGH



Street section

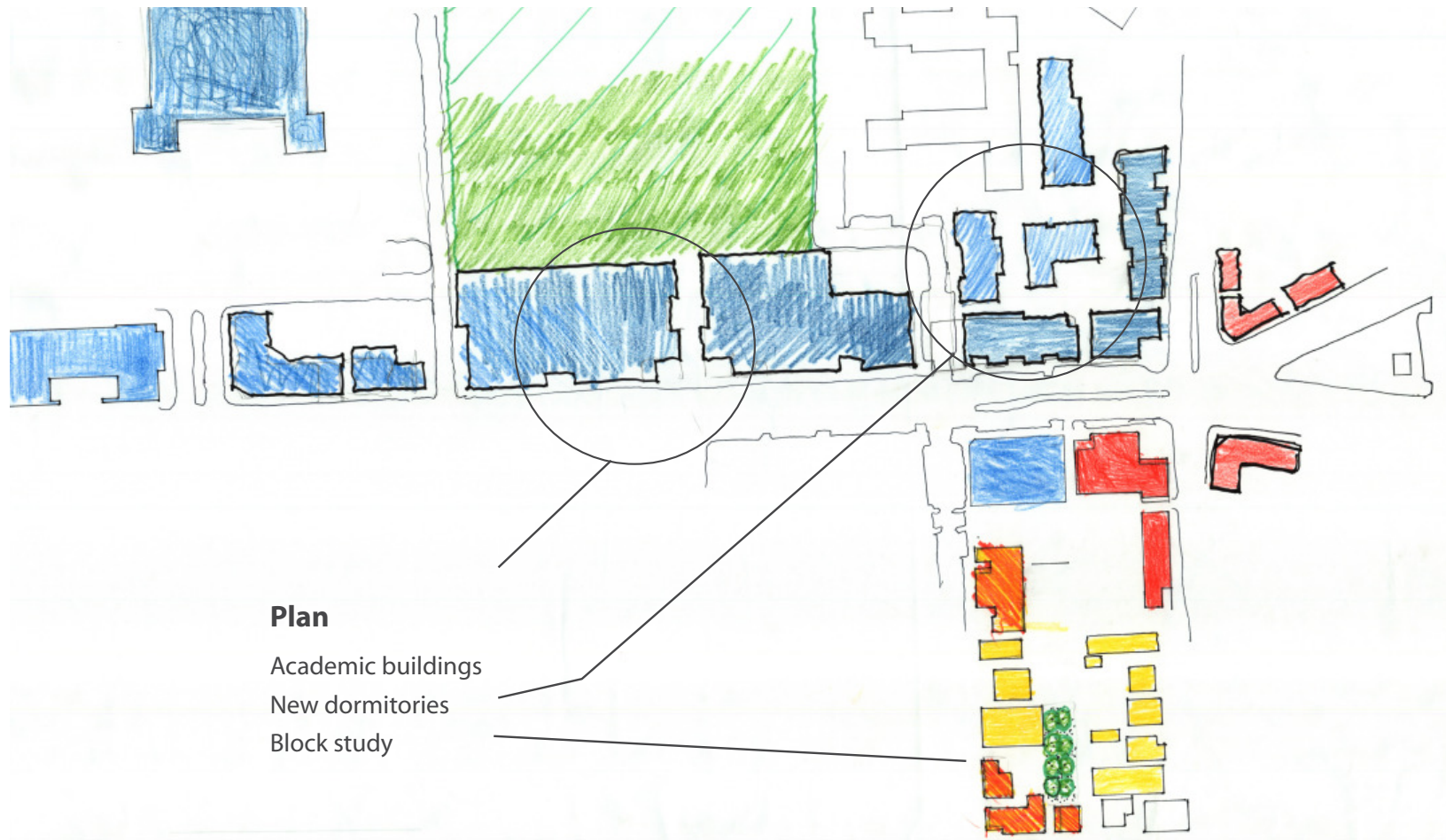
- stepped building section
- pedestrian friendly street design
- adding density with existing context

Mixed Use and Scaled Building Height:

Along Central Avenue, it was proposed that new mixed-use buildings (primarily commercial on the first floor and residential or offices above) would line the South side of Central Avenue. To keep with the scale of Central Avenue, it was proposed that all buildings would be required to have two stories of building height along Central Avenue, and any additionally required heights would step back from the street edge. This design intention allowed new buildings to be in scale with existing Central Avenue buildings, while allowing for greater density.

Additional Academic Buildings:

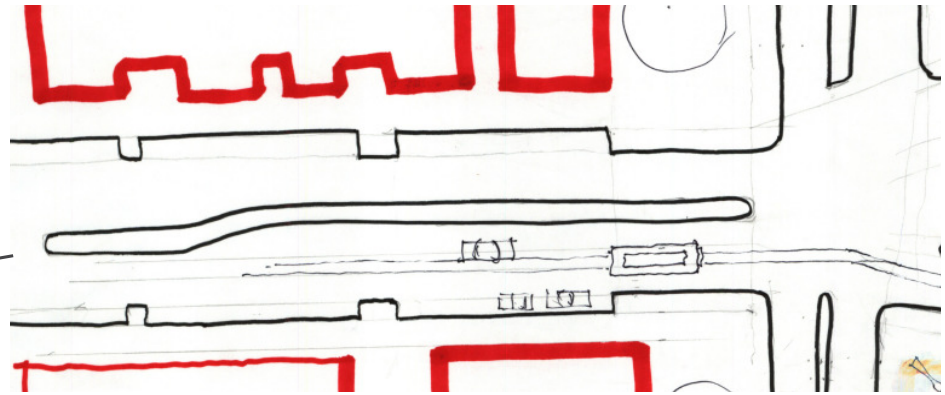
Additional dormitories were proposed for both sides of Johnson Field, with the Western dormitory having direct access to the newly formed extension of Columbia Drive. The Eastern dormitories would infill a newly created housing quadrangle at the Southeastern corner of campus, at Girard and Central



Block Study:

The team also proposed a new design of the eastern-most block within the project area. Our selected block is bounded by Central and Silver Avenues to the north and south, respectively, and Girard Boulevard and Vassar Drive to the east and west, respectively. We proposed a mixed-use block that would match the larger building scales of Central but would gradually reduce the scale of building along Vassar and Girard, eventually meeting the smaller residential scale of Silver.

All existing buildings remained. Mixed-use commercial buildings—with residential or offices above—were designed to hold the street edge (on both Central and Girard). Off-street parking was added behind the buildings, and could easily be accessed from the alleys. Small-scaled apartment buildings were added to the block, to increasing housing density. The team felt it important to keep all parking to either the street or off of the alley, eliminating all street-exposed surface parking lots.

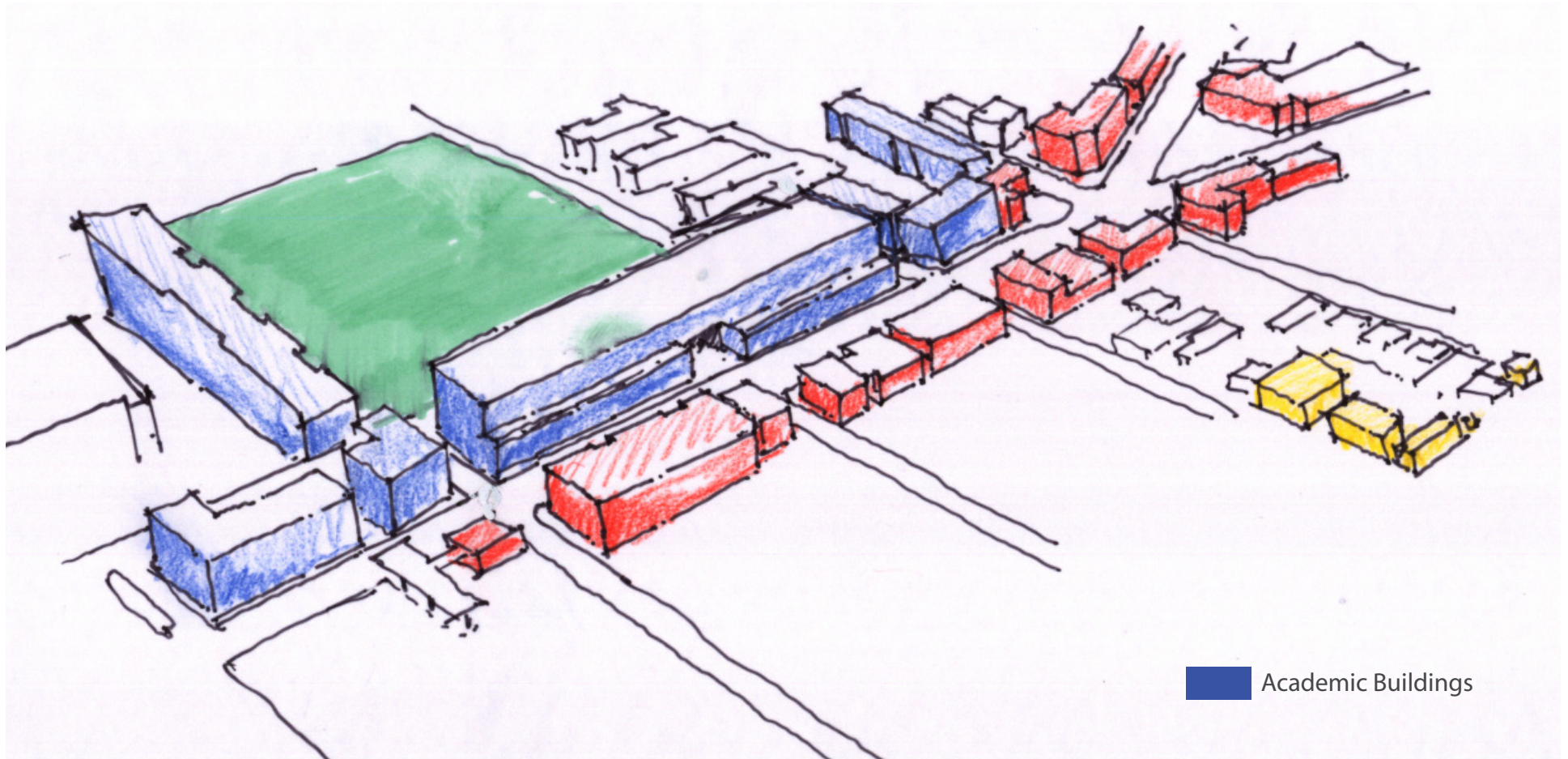


Street plan and section

- pedestrian shielding from parking lane
- mass transit in driving lane

Pedestrian Preference:

The team proposed narrowing Central Avenue to accommodate a parking lane and wide driving lanes. The team felt that in this area, pedestrian traffic should have preference over vehicular traffic. The parking lane would shield pedestrians. The wide driving lane would accommodate mass transit vehicles—such as the proposed trolley and the ABQ busses, which make frequent stops. The wider drive lane would allow personal vehicles enough room to maneuver around any stopped traffic. To also encourage pedestrian traffic, sidewalks were made larger and accommodated trees.



Academic Buildings:

As part of the Central Avenue study, the team introduced two additional academic buildings along the north face of Central Avenue, (to be determined by the University), with a new Student Athletics and Activities Center to be located South of Johnson Field between Columbia and Vassar Drives. Columbia and Vassar were extended into campus and would frame the east and west edges of Johnson Field.

It was proposed the existing Redondo Drive would be terminated at Columbia Street, allowing the new Athletics and Activities Center to have direct access to the playing fields. The Athletics and Activities Center's South face would maintain Central Avenue's proposed two story height limit, while the North Face would be allowed to reach 5 stories. The team felt that because of the vast scale of the existing field that a five story building would be a great terminus to the space.

GROUP TWO - CENTRAL AVENUE AND ALLEYWAY

The area just south of the UNM campus is underdeveloped. Frequently referred to as the “student ghetto,” it is characterized by absentee residential landlords and precarious commercial enterprise.

This design seeks to promote cooperative action between the University and the City such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the actions.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Campus Entry**
- **Pedestrian Access**
- **Integration of Campus and City**
- **Transportation Node**
- **No Front Side/ Back Side - Buildings with Two Faces**
- **Redondo Connection Across Central**



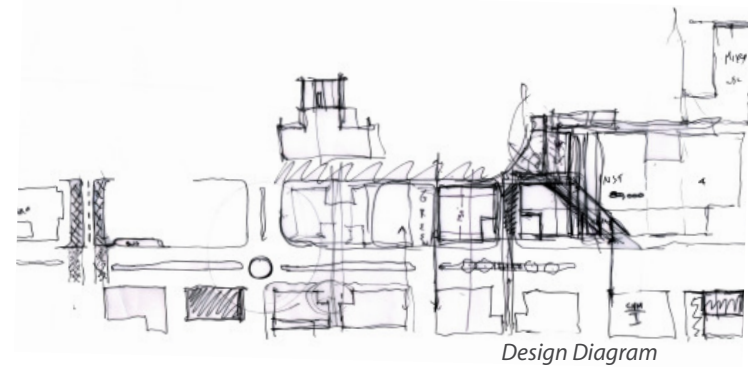
Area of Study



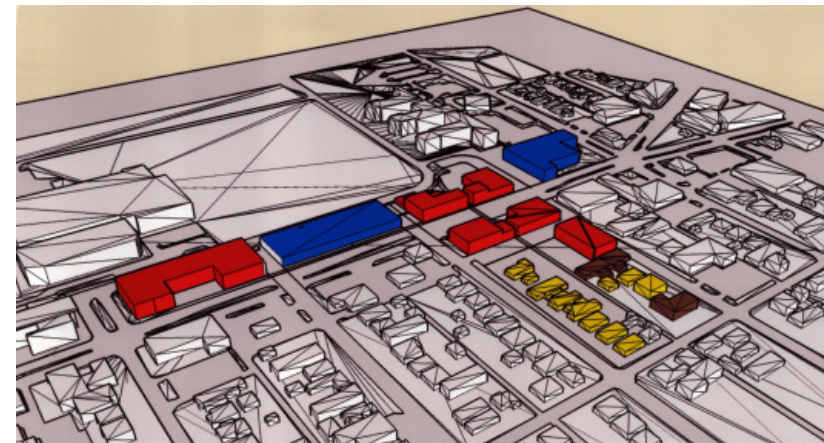
Intersection of Central and Former Alley between Princeton and Vassar

Intersection

- connection across Central Ave.
- transportation node
- campus entry

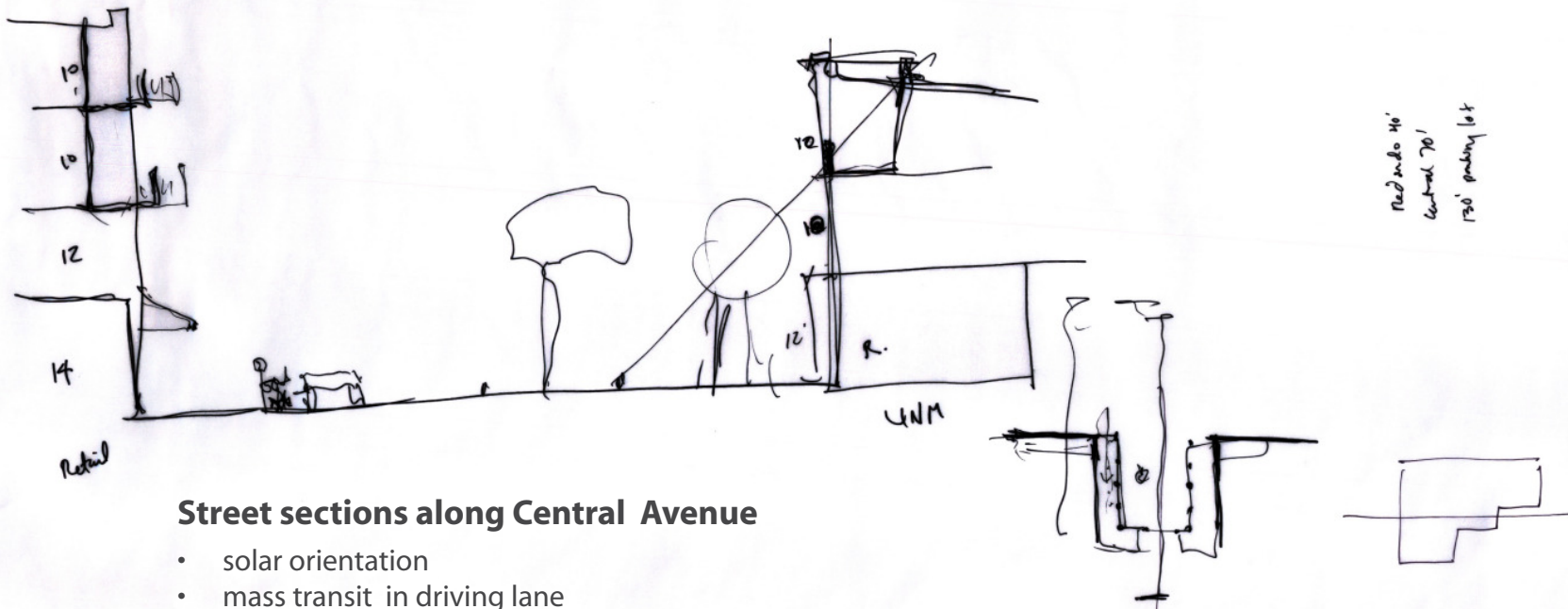


Design Diagram



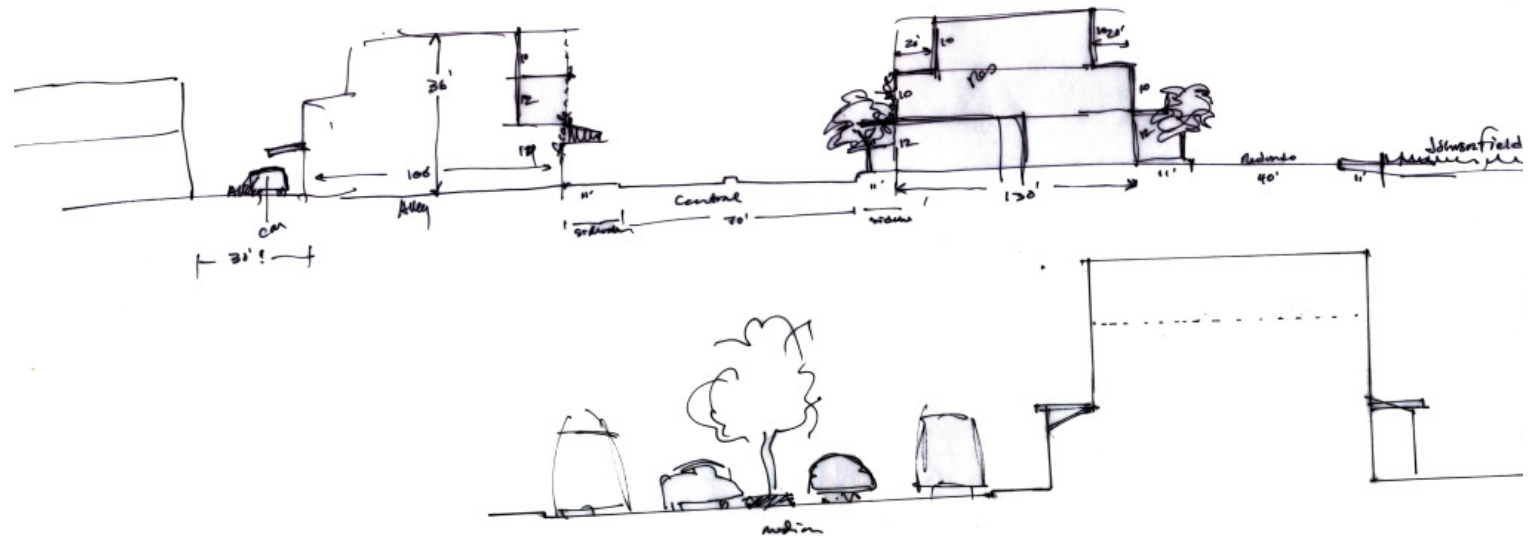
Land Use

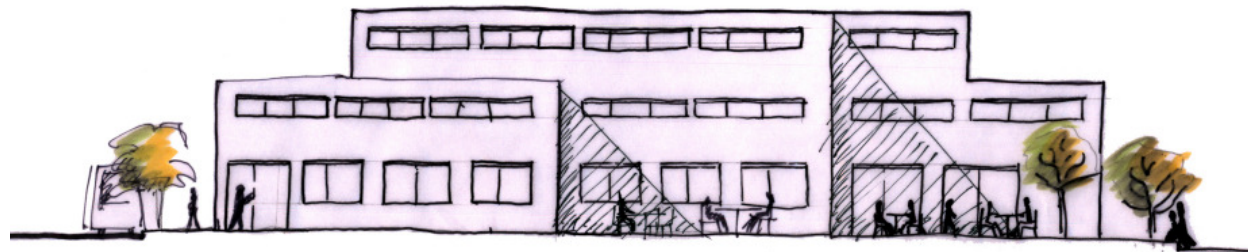
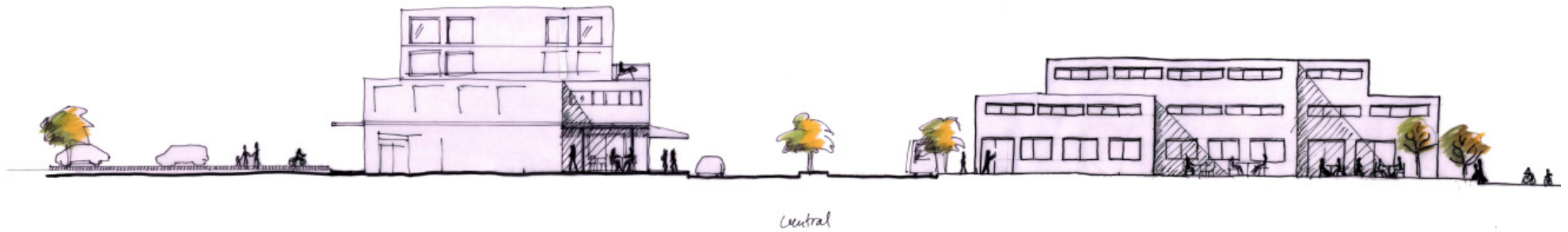
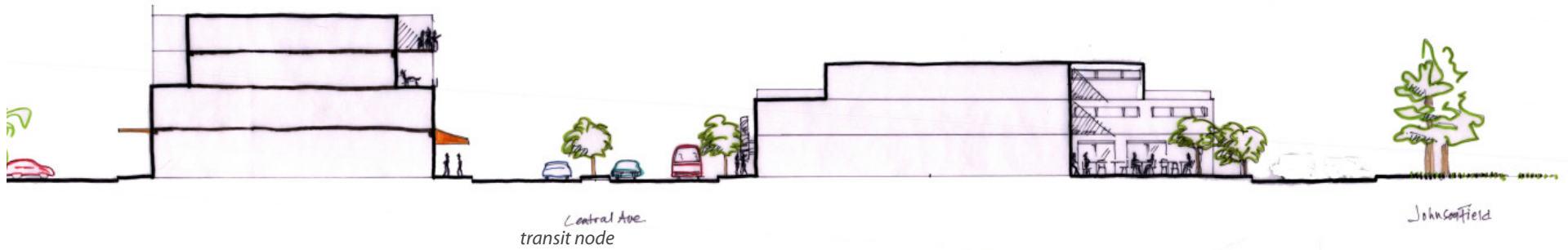
- Institutional
- Residential/Apartments
- Commercial



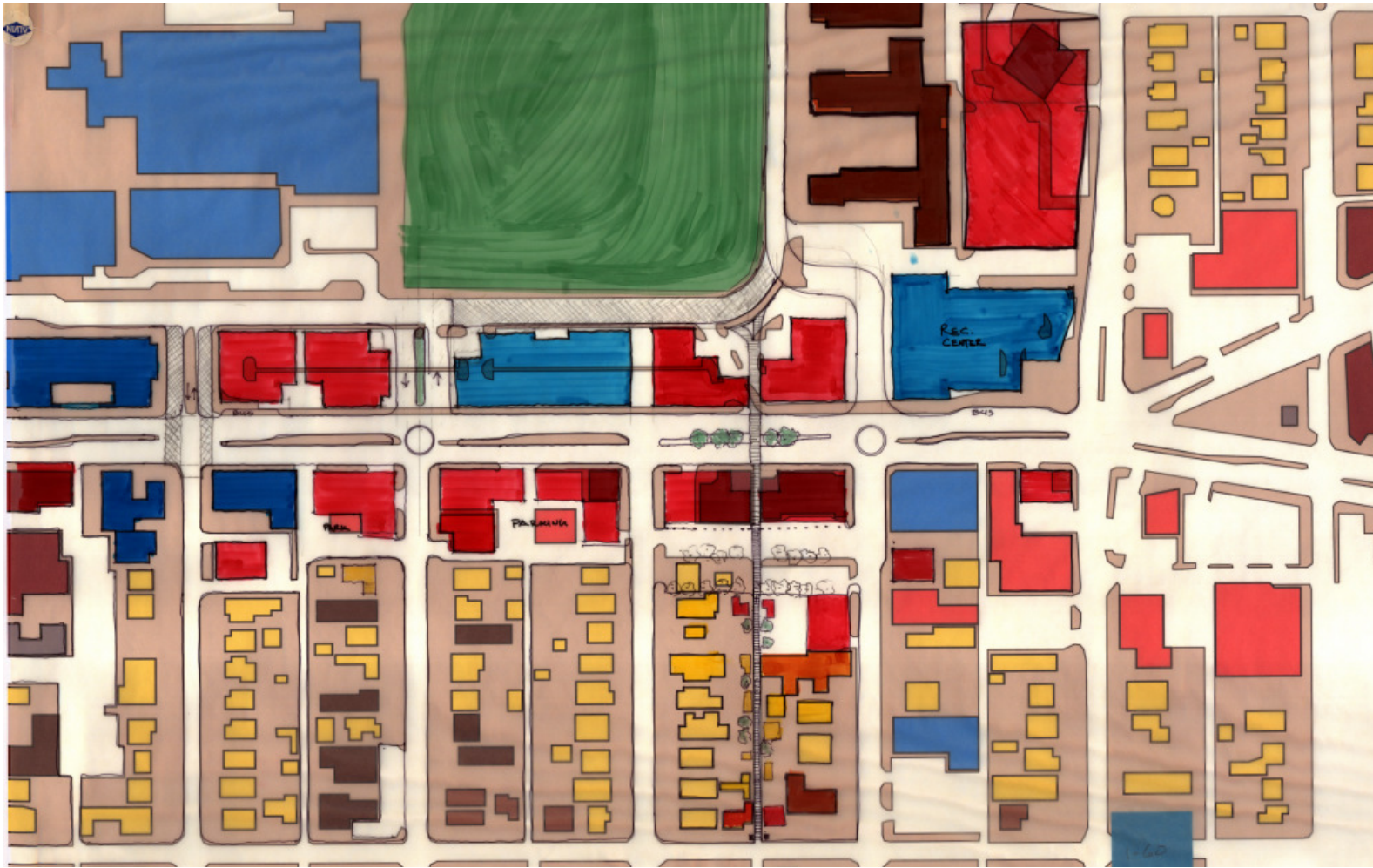
Street sections along Central Avenue

- solar orientation
- mass transit in driving lane
- face to face- two sides



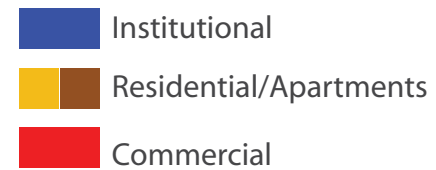


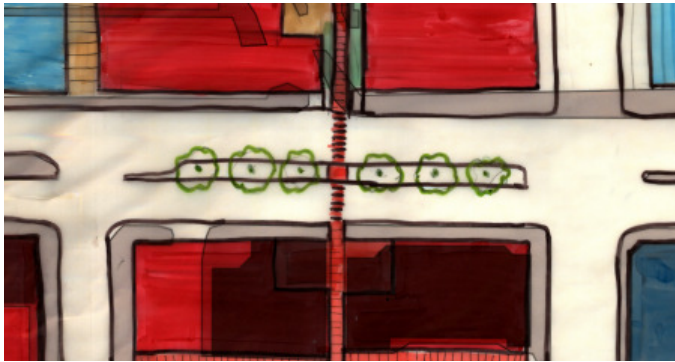
The buildings along Central Avenue are stepped back to maintain the human scale at the sidewalk while increasing density.



Integration of Campus and Central Avenue

- Increase the density throughout the Central Avenue corridor through commercial, institutional, and mixed use development
- Connect Central Avenue to Redondo Drive





Mid-block crossing

- Institutional
- Residential/Apartments
- Commercial

The proposed changes are to increase the densities along Central Avenue between Vasser Drive and Princeton Drive. This would be achieved by adding mixed use commercial buildings on both sides of Central Avenue.

In addition, the alleyway between Central and Silver would be converted to a pedestrian/bike mews. Small apartments line the length of the alley behind the existing residences along Vasser and Princeton.

This new corridor would create a mid-block crossing tying the neighborhood to the UNM Campus.



GROUP THREE - CENTRAL TO SILVER, PRINCETON TO COLUMBIA

After a careful study of the site it was clear that an initial cataclysmic intervention (especially north of Central) followed by piece-meal, incremental change is the appropriate mechanism to spark responsible urban development in the area.

The proposed cataclysmic intervention introduces urban development tactics through compressive planning along Columbia Drive, which will set the precedent, infrastructure and framework necessary for the incremental re-development of the entire area.

Key Concepts

- **High to low density housing**
- **Consistent street edge**
- **Underground parking**
- **Tame Central with on street parking**
- **Diverse socio-economic populations**
- **Work opportunities**
- **Residential mews for tertiary**
- **street systems**

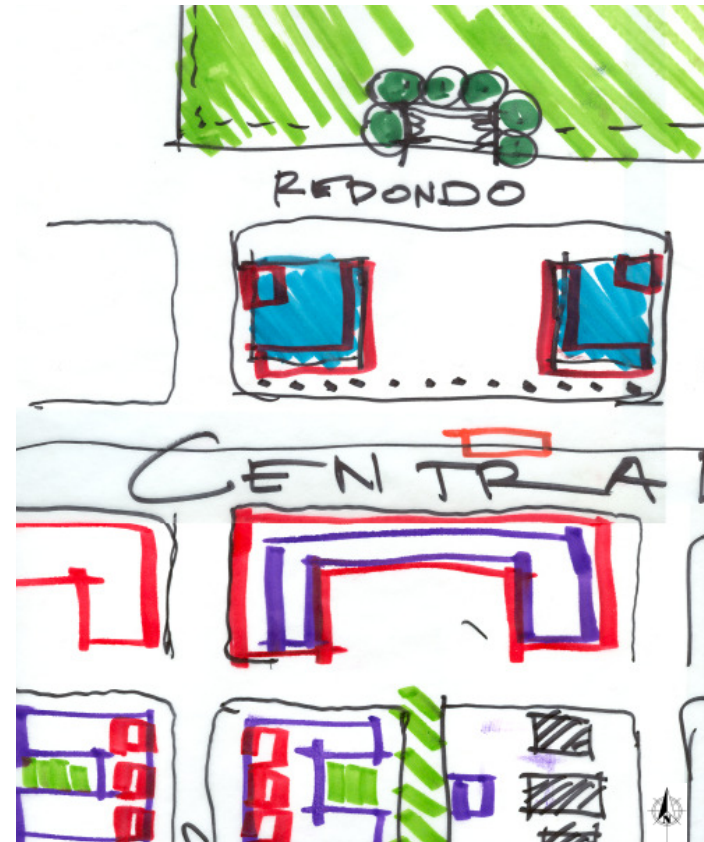


Area of Study



Rough Site Plan

- Institutional
- Commercial
- Residential

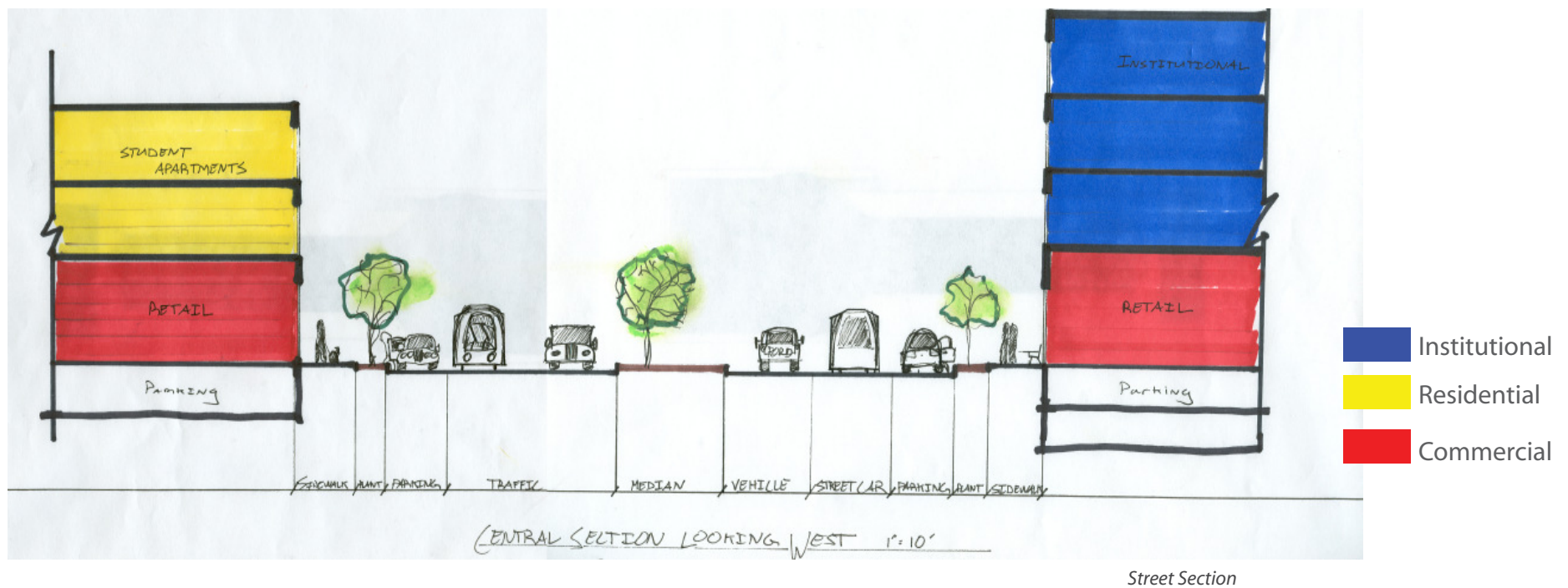


Visual and Pedestrian connection to Johnson Field

- Emphasize transect: Institutional
- Commercial high to low density residential.

Street edge defined at Central and Redondo

- This strategy defines a consistent street edge by requiring new structures to build up to a set line, typically the sidewalk's edge. This connects both sides of the street in a way that the set back commercial buildings do not.



Tame traffic flow along Central Avenue

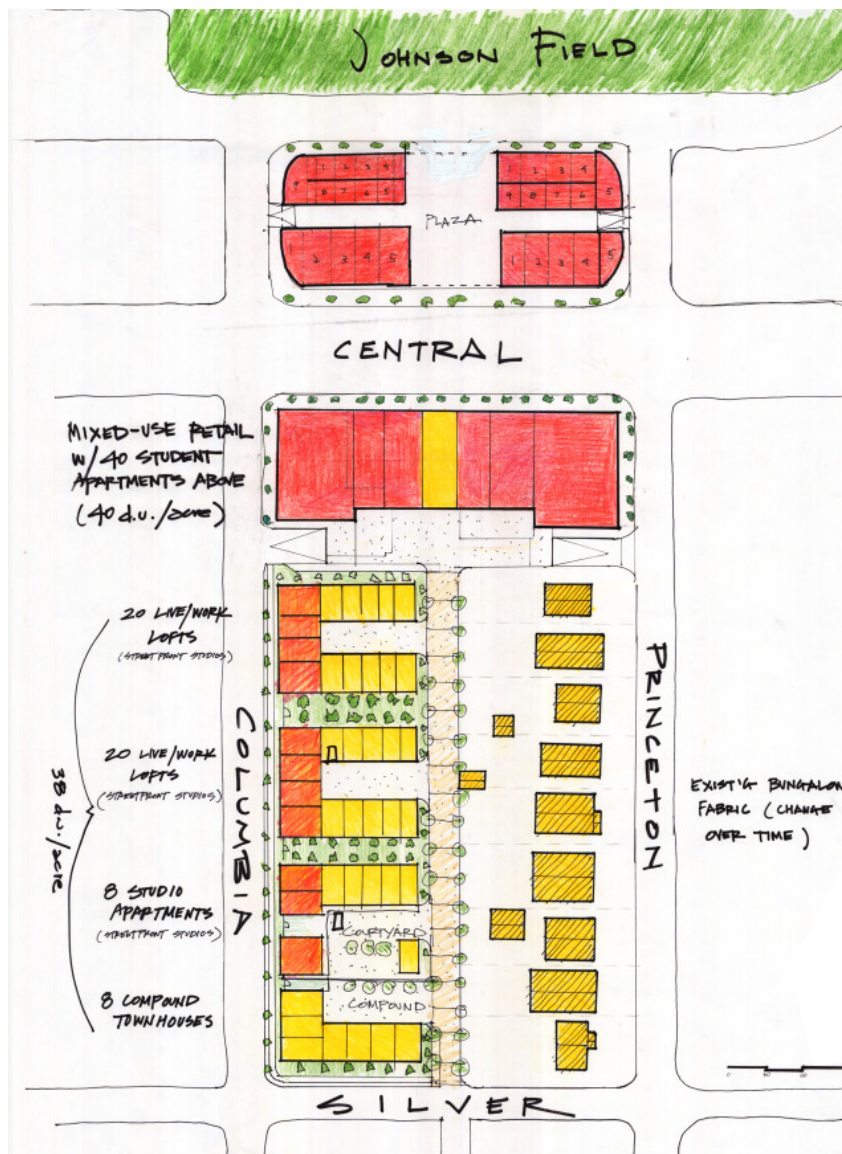
- Introduce a Central Avenue streetcar.
- Mixed used on both sides of Central and Redondo
- Introducing on street parking will help tame Central Avenue by slowing cars, while providing curbside parking for the new store.

Vigorously re-make the street edge of Columbia Drive and Princeton Drive

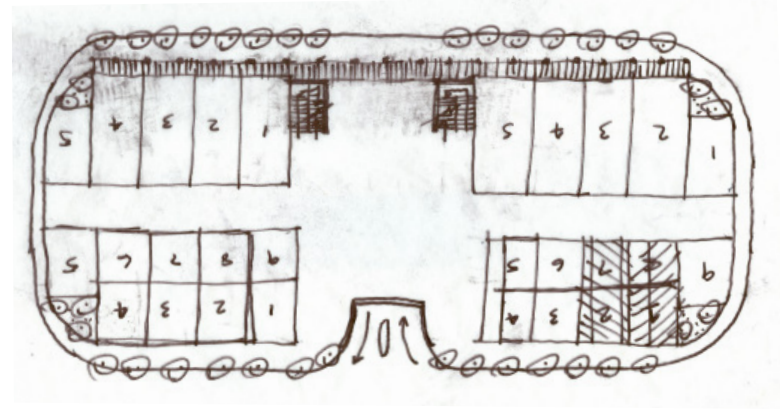
- Introducing mixed use building typologies.

Parking under Johnson Field

- This maintains the current amount of parking in the surface lots between Johnson Field and Central, while opening the site above to development above.



Site Plan



Create Residential Mews along alleys

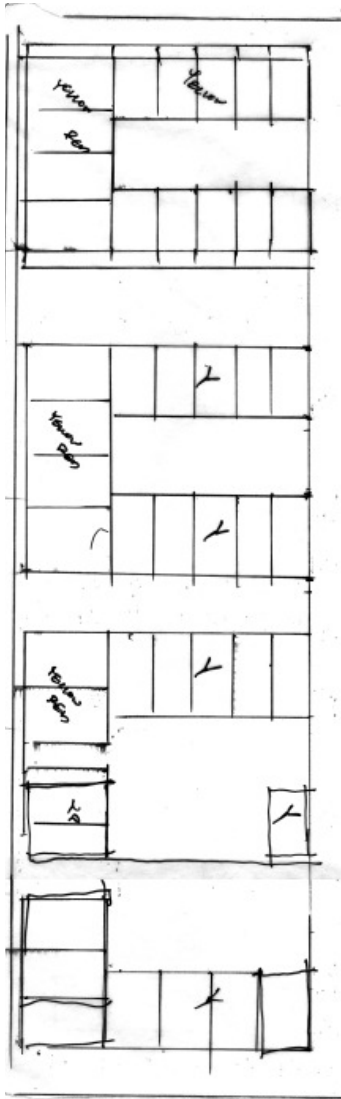
- Mews create a tertiary street system that allow people to access parking off of more traveled streets. They provide for an enhanced physical environment and circulation within each block, and opportunities for small scale, multi-family residential infill.

A range of housing types

- A range of housing prices and building forms will bring in a diversity of people transforming the area into more than a "student ghetto."
- Small-scale retail along Columbia Drive. This will provide live/work opportunities and create neighborhood oriented commercial, such as cafes, bookstores, bars, restaurants, and studios.

Mixed use along Central

- First floor commercial land use along both sides of Central will link the University shopping district just to the west with historic Nob Hill to the east. Three floors of housing above introduce higher densities that accommodate UNM students, staff and faculty while also supporting new commercial development and the street car system.



Mixed Use Plan



Dwelling Units per Acre of Mixed residential building typologies (rental and ownership).

GROUP FOUR - CENTRAL AVENUE AND JOHNSON GYM

Incorporation of the student physical activity center into the fabric of the campus to help create an entrance to campus, reveal the original Johnson Gym, and help define the northern edge of Central Avenue.

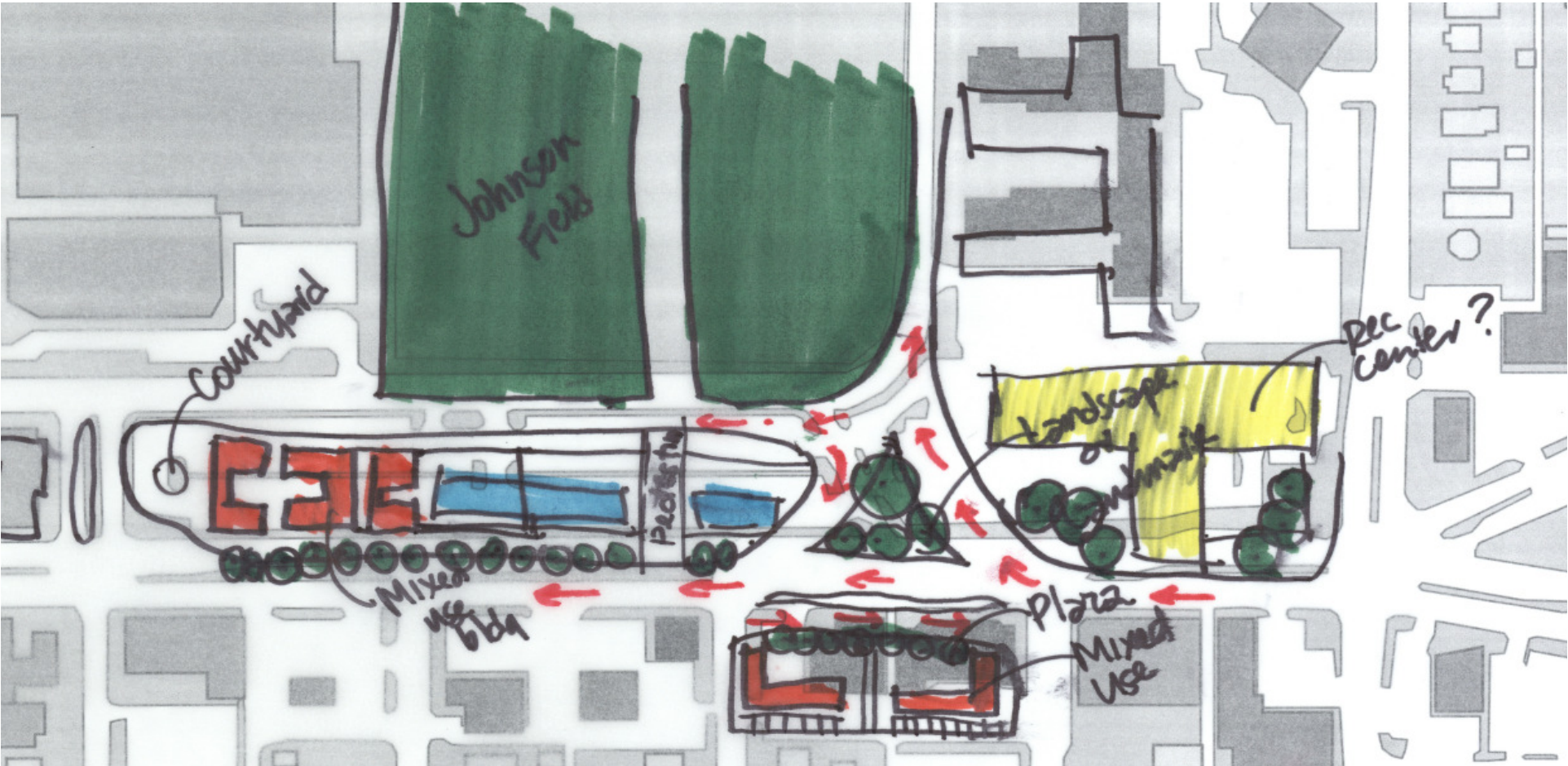
KEY CONCEPTS

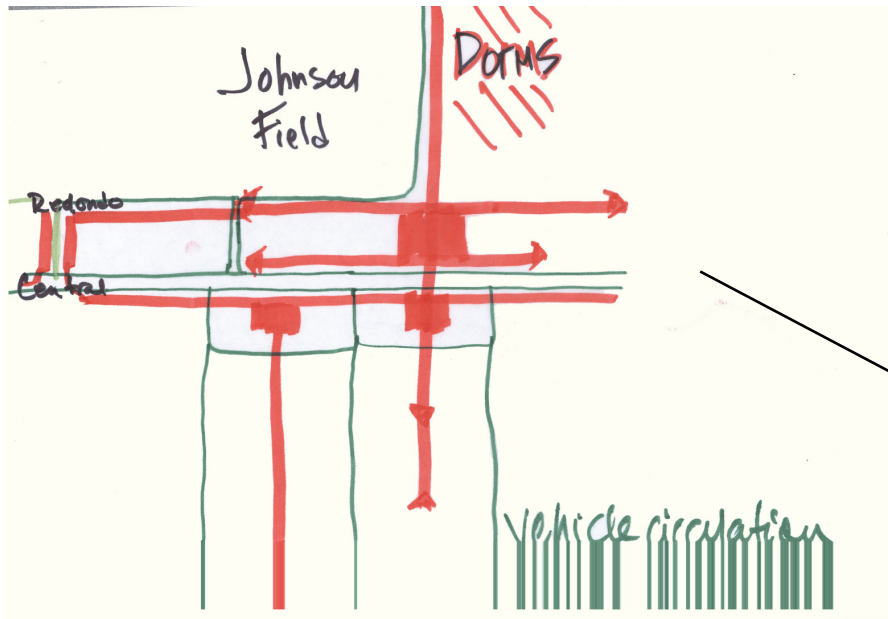
- Make public spaces (gym, courtyard, Central Avenue, parking courts, mews).
- Allow for incremental development on private lands south of Central.
- Use the campus façades on Central to mix town and gown by strengthening mixed use along both sides of Central.



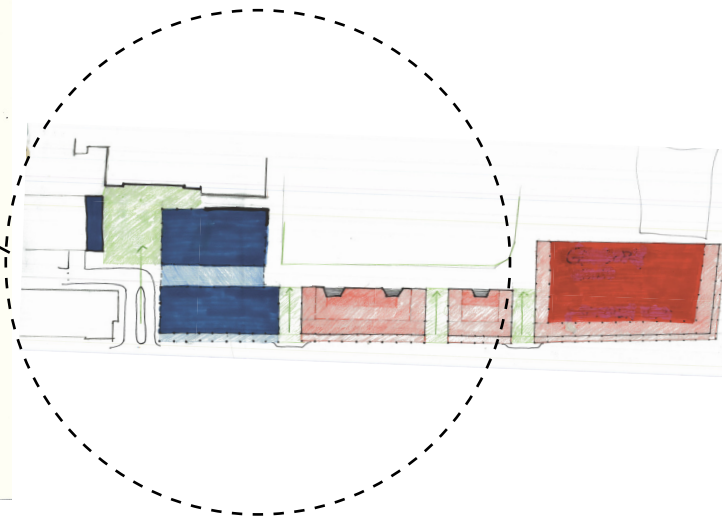
Area of Study

Plan Diagram





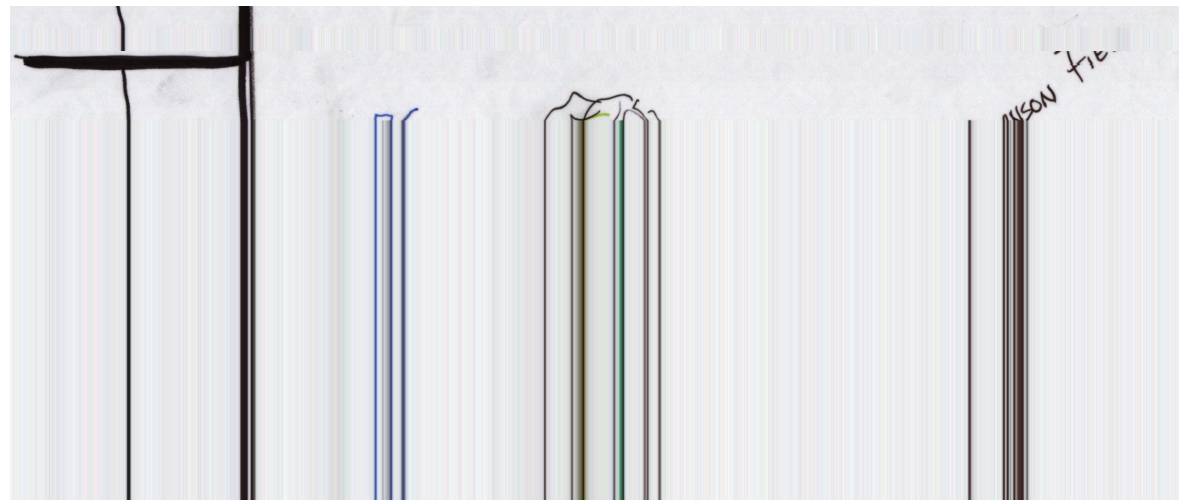
North Central Land Use Changes



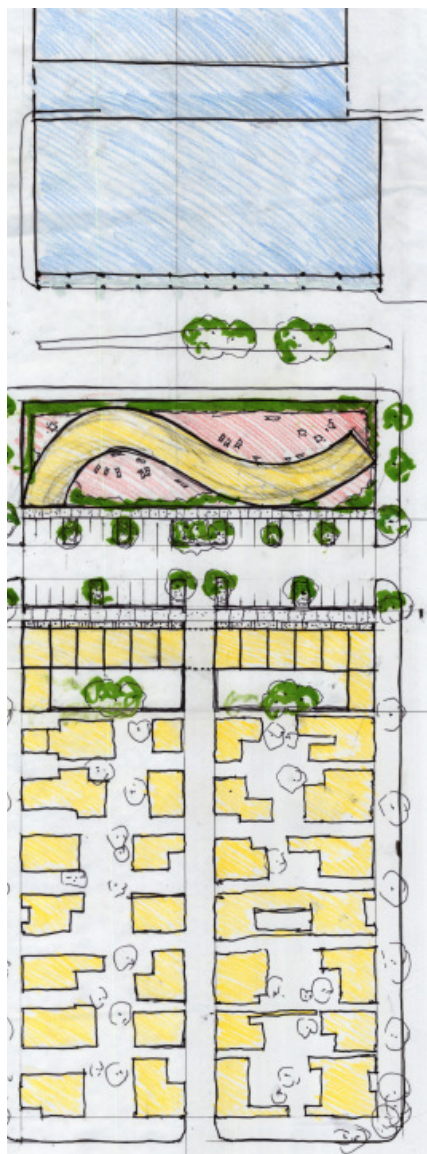
- Institutional
- Commercial

Closing Redondo Drive and creating a pedestrian/bike way.

Parking under the former road and commercial space facing the new pedestrian/bike way.



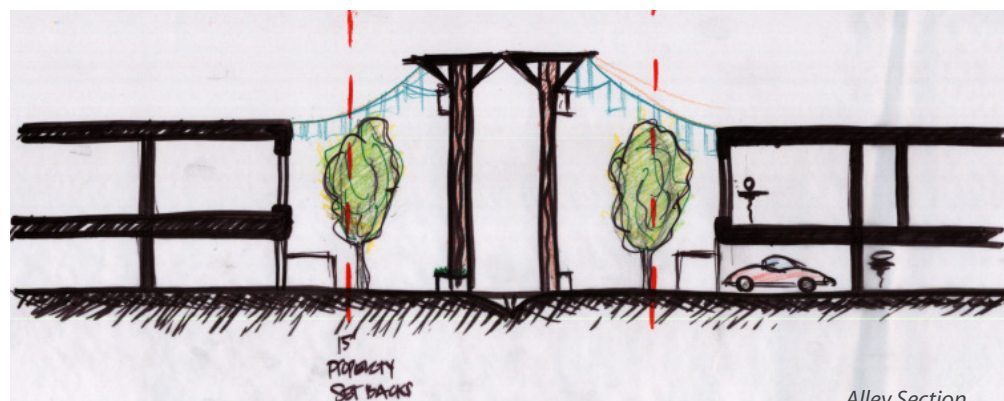
Adaptation of the alleys south of Central as informal mews and incremental infill of mid-density housing.



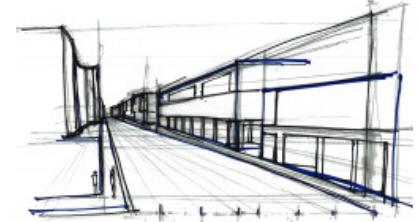
Site Plan



Alley Mews



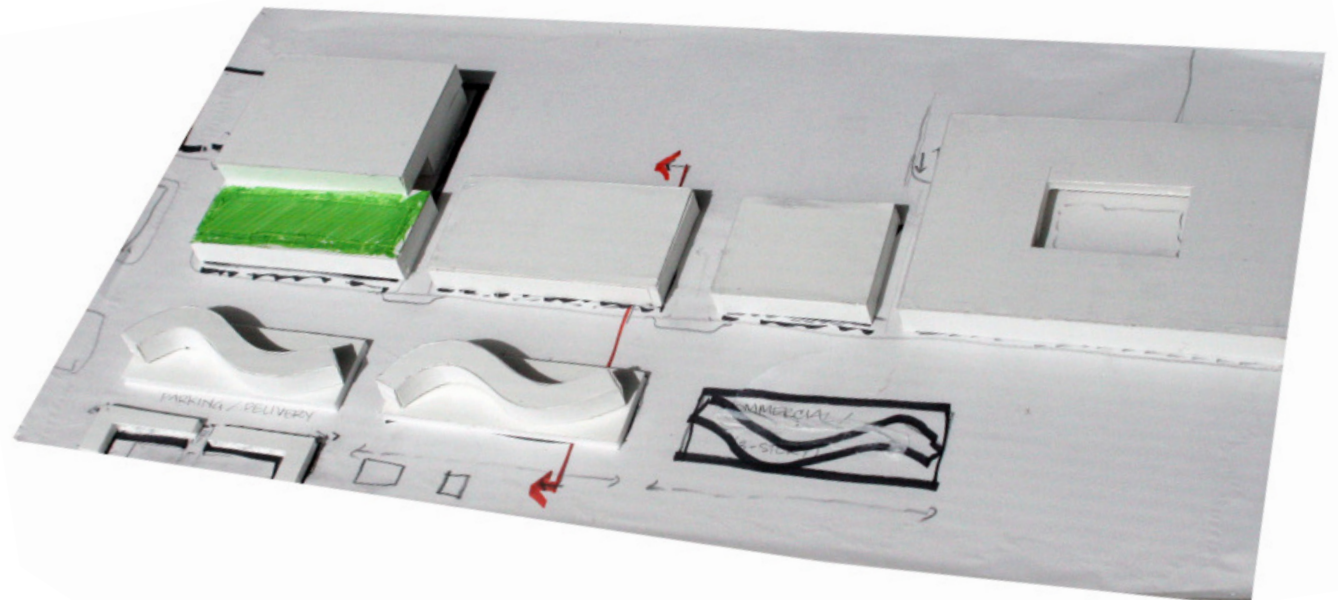
Alley Section

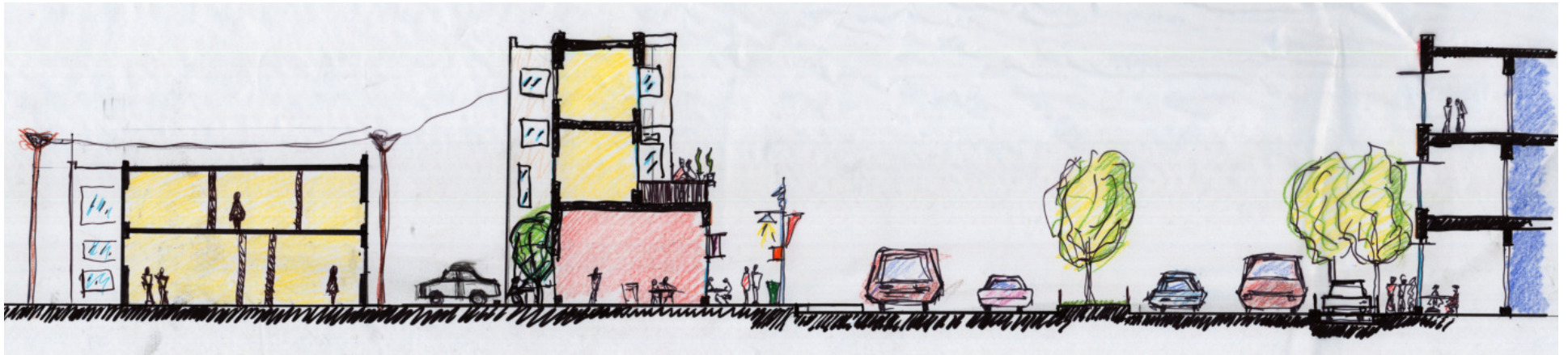


Process

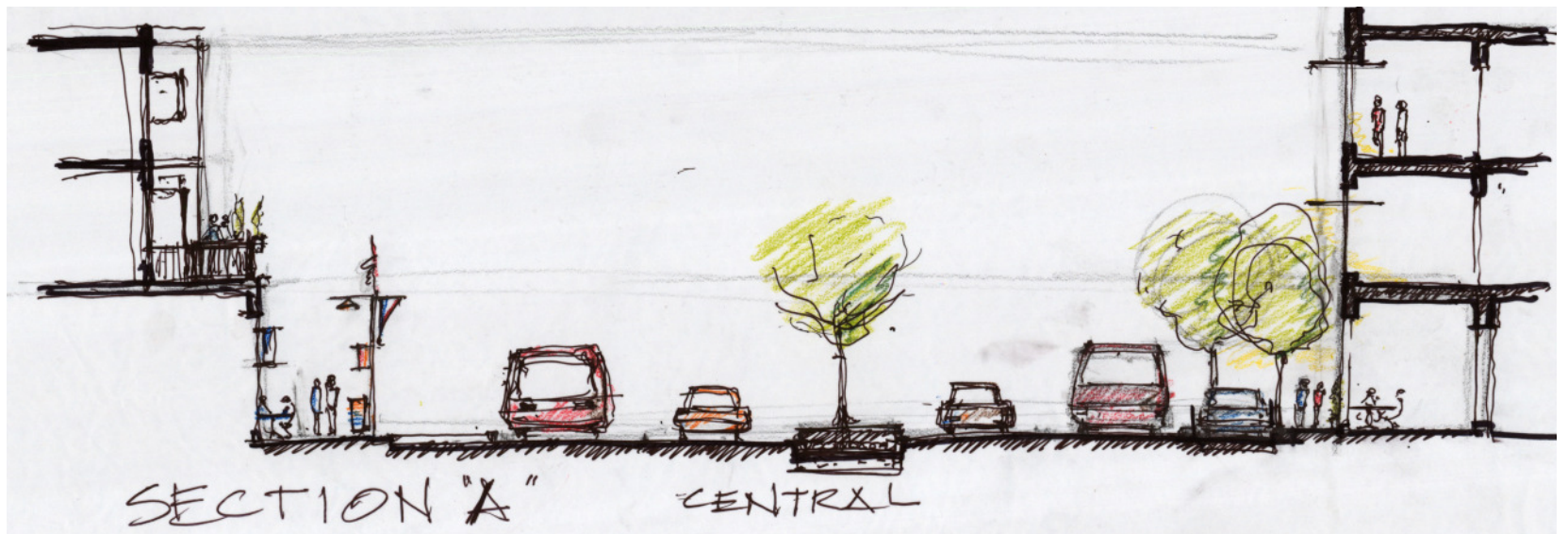
Suggestions of mixed use (retail/
residential) on both sides of
Central Avenue.

Incorporation of a grocery store
and mixed use to anchor
Central Avenue and Girard Drive.





Street Sections



Consideration of drastically reducing the amount of parking normally required for such development because, of, and to reinforce the walkable campus.